BRITISH COLUMBIA

# NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

## MCLEOD LAKE BAND SECURES CROWN TIMBER ACCESS

PRINCE GEORGE – The McLeod Lake Indian Band has reached a five-year agreement with the Province that will create new forestry opportunities in the Northern Interior and help combat the mountain pine beetle infestation, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

"First Nations are an important partner in our battle against the pine beetle," said Coleman. "Together we're working to recover economic value from attacked trees, while increasing First Nations participation in the forest sector."

The interim agreement provides access to 175,000 cubic metres of wood in both the Mackenzie and Prince George Timber Supply Areas. The volume augments the band's existing harvesting operations under Duz Cho Logging. Created in 1985, the company is one of B.C.'s biggest logging contractors, supporting 40 full-time and seasonal employees.

"The agreement signed today enhances our position as a major contributor to the Northern Interior forest economy," said Chief Alec Chingee. "We're always seeking new opportunities to expand our capacity and build a bright future for our people."

The McLeod Lake Indian Band is located approximately 140 kilometres north of Prince George along Highway 97.

To date, the Ministry of Forests and Range has reached agreements with 108 First Nations, granting access to more than 17.1 million cubic metres of timber and sharing $121.4 million in revenue.

"With each finalized agreement, we move closer to making First Nations full partners in British Columbia's forest sector," said Prince George North MLA Pat Bell. "The McLeod Lake Band's achievements are an example of what's possible when we work together."

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Funding has also been set aside to support First Nations participation on the Province's Mountain Pine Beetle Response Team and assist in sustaining First Nations traditions and customs that could be disrupted by the infestation.

For more information on the province's mountain pine beetle action plan, visit www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle online.

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